



Activity 1

Paleontology Crossword Puzzle

Students complete a crossword puzzle of paleontology vocabulary.

Guiding Questions: What is paleontology? How has life evolved on earth?
Critical Content: Paleontology is the study of ancient life. There are four major eras of the earth's history and of life described in the Geologic Time Scale.
Grades: 3-6
Duration: 15-30 minutes
Group size: individuals or in groups of 2
Setting: classroom
Materials: [Introduction to Paleontology](#) and [The Geologic Time Scale](#)

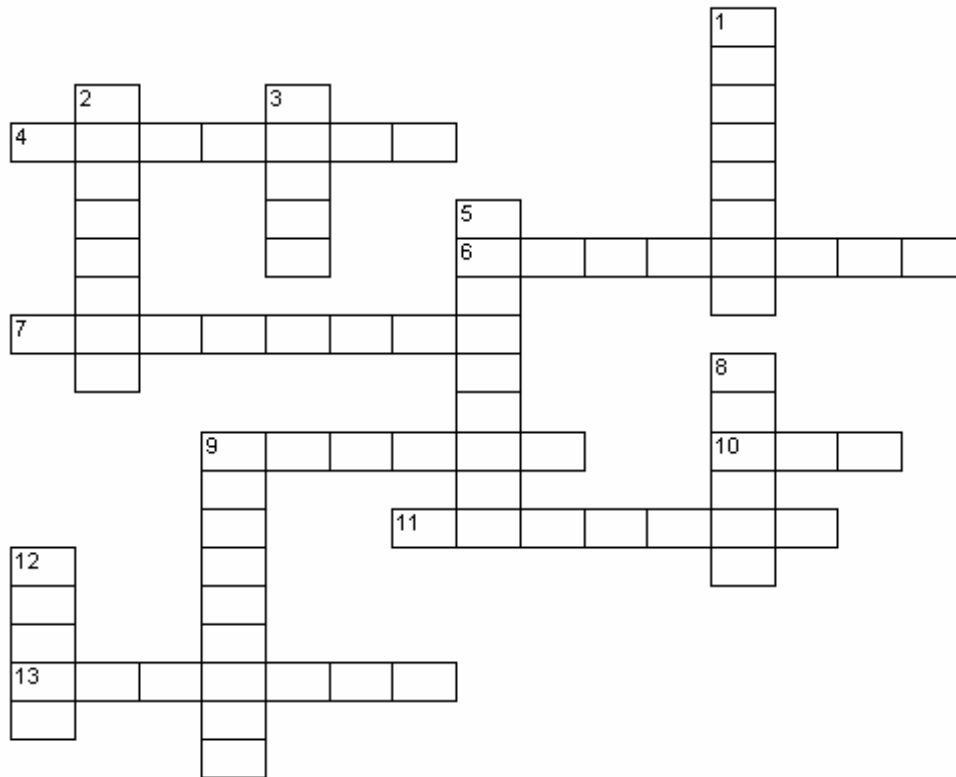
Before You Begin: Students should read [Introduction to Paleontology](#) and [The Geologic Time Scale](#). If the readings are too difficult for younger students, explain the material to the class and give them the Geologic Time Scale as a reference.

Procedures: Complete the crossword puzzle below.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the things that paleontologists can learn about the earth's history?
2. What are the four major eras of geologic time?
3. What are some of the things you most want to learn about dinosaurs and other prehistoric life?

The Paleontology Crossword Puzzle



Across:

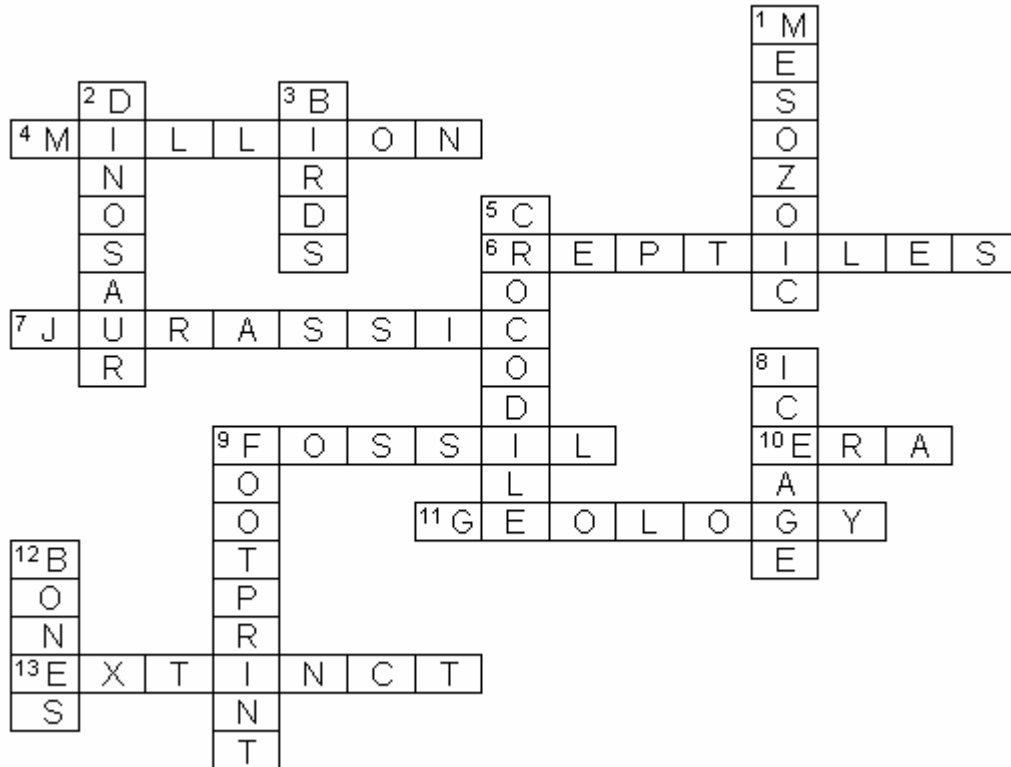
4. When talking about how long ago the dinosaurs lived, we use this word to describe the numbers of years. It is part of the abbreviation "mya".
6. The earliest mammals evolved from these.
7. The period of the Mesozoic Era made famous in a movie about bringing dinosaurs back to life
9. Evidence of past life
10. The major unit of geologic time. There are four of these, including the Precambrian, Paleozoic, Mesozoic and the Cenozoic.
11. The study of rocks, including fossil remains.
13. The permanent loss of a species. When the species is gone forever it "goes _____".

Down:

1. Also known as the Age of the Ruling Reptiles.
2. The group of reptiles that ruled the land millions of years ago.
3. These flying animals are still common today. They evolved from dinosaurs.
5. Along with the dinosaur and the pterosaur, this was one of the three Ruling Reptiles. Some species of this animal still live along waterways in Florida and Africa.
8. A time when the Earth got very cold and huge glaciers covered the north.
9. Evidence left behind where a dinosaur has walked. A hadrosaur left one of these behind in Aniakchak National Park
12. The parts of dinosaurs most often found as fossils. These help us to understand what dinosaurs may have looked like.

Answers to Activity 1

Paleontology Crossword Puzzle



Across:

4. Million – when talking about how long ago the dinosaurs lived, we use this word to describe the numbers of years. It is part of the abbreviation “mya”

6. Reptiles – the earliest mammals evolved from these.

7. Jurassic – the period of the Mesozoic Era made famous in a movie about bringing dinosaurs back to life

9. Fossil - evidence of past life

10. Era – the major unit of geologic time. There are four of these, including the Precambrian, Paleozoic, Mesozoic and the Cenozoic.

11. Geology – the study of rocks, including fossil remains.

13. Extinct – the permanent loss of a species. When the species is gone forever it “goes _____”.

Down:

1. Mesozoic – also known as the Age of the Ruling Reptiles.

2. Dinosaur – the group of reptiles that ruled the land millions of years ago.

3. Birds – these flying animals are still common today. They evolved from dinosaurs.

5. Crocodile – along with the dinosaur and the pterosaur, this was one of the three Ruling Reptiles. Some species of this animal still live along waterways in Florida and Africa.

8. Ice Age – a time when the Earth got very cold and huge glaciers covered the north.

9. Footprint – evidence left behind where a dinosaur has walked. A hadrosaur left one of these behind in Aniakchak National Park

12. Bones – The parts of dinosaurs most often found as fossils. These help us to understand what dinosaurs may have looked like.